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ABSTRACT

The Employability Skills Program (ESP) at Edison High School was designed to serve 10th grade students who were considered to be potential dropouts because of basic skills deficiencies, poor attitudes toward school, or individual adjustment problems. The major student-related objectives of the project were to improve basic skills, improve attitudes toward school, improve self-concepts, and to clarify educational and vocational goals. About 100 students participated in ESP during the 1972-73 school year. One-third of the students were identified as eligible for instruction through the Special Learning and Behavior Problems (SLBP) Program. Ninth grade school records of the ESP students indicated poor attendance, poor behavior ratings, and mainly grades of D and F in academic subjects. Between September 1972 and May 1973, ESP students made modest gains on the STEP Reading and English Expression Tests and greater gains on the Social Studies test. The majority of the ESP students felt that they benefited academically from participation in ESP, that they improved their self-understanding, and that they learned about careers and jobs. ESP students appeared to have more favorable views of their teachers, the relevance of the curriculum and their own learning progress than did two comparison groups of 1972-73 students. Eighty percent of the students would select ESP over the regular high school program in 1973-74 if they had an option. Recommendations were made to continue the program. (Author/DEP)

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Minneapolis Edison High School Employability Skills Program: An Evaluation 1972-73

Lary Johnson
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Ideas expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Minneapolis Public School Administration nor the Minneapolis School Board.

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August 1973

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Minneapolis Public Schools

Minneapolis Edison High School Employability Skills Program: An Evaluation 1972-73

Summary

See pages

The Employability Skills Program (ESP) at Edison High School was designed to serve tenth grade students who were considered to be potential dropouts because of basic skills deficiencies, poor attitudes toward school, or individual adjustment problems. The major student-related objectives of the project were to improve basic skills, improve attitudes toward school, improve self-concepts, and to clarify educational and vocational goals.

About one hundred students participated in ESP during the 1972-73 school year. One-third of the students were identified as eligible for instruction through the Special Learning and Behavior Problems (SLBP) Program. 1-7
Ninth grade school records of the ESP students indicated poor attendance, poor behavior ratings, and mainly grades of D and F in academic subjects.

Between September 1972 and May 1973, ESP students made gains on the STEP Reading and English Expression tests that would be expected of students who scored well below average on the publisher's norms. Although mean 6, 8-11
raw scores were higher in the spring then in the previous fall, the percentile ranks corresponding to the mean raw scores were the same in the spring and fall. ESP students showed greater improvement on the Social Studies achievement test.

The majority of the ESP students felt that they benefited academically from participation in ESP, that they improved their self-understanding, and that they learned about careers and jobs. ESP students appeared 14-19
to have more favorable views of their teachers, the relevance of the curriculum, and their own learning progress than did two comparison groups of 1972-73 students. Eighty percent of the students would select ESP over the regular high school program in 1973-74 if they had an option.

Recommendations were made to continue the program, to give high priority to efforts to develop a program to improve basic skills, particularly in reading, and 21,22
to improve the vocational development aspect of the program by greater involvement of counselors and work coordinators.

August 1973 Research and Evaluation Department

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Minneapolis Public Schools

Minneapolis Edison High School Employability Skills Program: An Evaluation 1972-73

This evaluation report of the Edison Employability Skills Program (ESP) was conducted by the Minneapolis Public Schools' Research and Evaluation Department at the request of the ESP staff at Edison High School and Nathaniel Ober, Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education.

Brief Description of the Edison ESP[1]

The Edison Employability Skills Program (ESP) began operation in the fall of 1972. The project was designed to serve tenth grade students who, for several possible reasons, were considered to be potential high school dropouts: basic skills deficiencies, poor attitudes toward school, and individual adjustment problems.

Objectives

The ESP staff members identified the following objectives for the participating students:

- improvement in academic basic skills
- greater awareness of who they are
- more positive self-concepts
- positive attitudes toward school and ESP
- awareness and acceptance of responsibility for their behavior
- development of ability to relate to people
- greater awareness of job characteristics
- clarification of educational and vocational goals

Participants

The project began in September 1972 with ninety-two tenth grade students. Seventy-four of these students were programmed into ESP at the end of ninth grade on the recommendation of their junior high counselor and the subsequent approval of their parents. The remaining

[1] For a more complete description of the operation of the Employability Skills Program, interested individuals should contact Rosemary Hager, ESP Coordinator, Edison High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

eighteen students were placed in the project within the first month of the 1972-73 school year. Sixteen students enrolled in the project and twenty-one students left the project during the year, leaving eighty-seven students enrolled in ESP at the end of the year. According to records kept by the project coordinator, the twenty-one students who left ESP during the year did so for the following reasons:

Transferred to regular program at own request	4
Transferred to regular program at ESP staff request	2
Dropped out, re-entered regular program, dropped out	2
Dropped out	3
Did not appear	2
On work program, could not arrange ESP schedule	1
Transferred to other special program in Minneapolis	4
Transferred to school outside Minneapolis	3

Thirty-two of the ESP students were identified by the Minneapolis Public Schools' Special Education Department as eligible for assistance from the Special Learning and Behavior Problems (SLBP) Program. Three types of students are eligible for SLBP instruction: socially maladjusted, learning disabled, and emotionally disturbed.

Personnel

Four certificated teachers--one each in English, mathematics, reading, and social studies--worked with the ESP students the entire year. An SLBP tutor was hired during the first semester and a work experience coordinator helped with the ESP students the first semester. A counselor and school social worker also were available but had their regular student assignments as well. Four teacher aides worked 15 hours per week as assistants to the staff members. The reading teacher acted as the coordinator of the project.

Project Activities

The basic ESP student schedule was three consecutive one-hour classes in the morning. The ESP English, mathematics, and social studies teachers each had a class of ESP students during each of the three hours. The reading teacher also had a class during each of these hours in which she worked with forty-nine ESP students with severe reading problems.

The SLBP tutor worked with twelve SLBP students in the reading center. Eighteen of the other twenty SLBP-qualified students in ESP were part of the forty-nine students who received reading help.

The instructional materials and methods were highly individualized within all classrooms. For example, the students in ESP mathematics worked at their own rate within a continuum of mathematics skills. Vocational awareness and orientation were emphasized throughout the program. The work experience and counseling departments contributed occupational materials, the social studies class had a unit on careers, the math teacher used special job-related materials, many field trips were taken, work-related films were shown, and about one-third of the ESP students "shadowed" workers on the job.

Several of the ESP students participated in the tenth grade Work Experience Program (WEP). Students in the Work Experience Program were scheduled into a one-hour work orientation class each morning, regular classes the remainder of the morning (ESP classes for ESP students), and a supervised job in the afternoon. Sixteen ESP students were enrolled in the Work Experience Program in September 1972. However, by May 1973, the number of ESP students in the Work Experience Program had decreased to four students. During the school year, two students left ESP and stayed in WEP, twelve students left WEP and remained in ESP, and eight students left both ESP and WEP.

The ESP teachers met once a week throughout the school year during a common preparation period to plan future ESP activities, discuss mutual problems, admit new students, and shift students' schedules when necessary.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluator began work on the project toward the end of the first semester. The ESP staff members and the evaluator decided that the evaluation should concentrate on basic skills achievement and student attitudes toward ESP and school in general. Achievement tests had been given in all academic areas in September of 1972 and were scheduled to be given again at the end of the 1972-73 school year. A student questionnaire was developed that measured general attitudes toward school and specific attitudes toward the ESP program. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A.

Academic and behavioral data also were collected from each student's ninth grade school record to help provide a good description of the students in ESP.

A Description of the ESP Students

Table 1 on page 5 presents a descriptive picture of students who were in ESP at the end of the 1972-73 school year, students who left ESP during the year, and a comparison group of students. The thirty-two comparison students were on the ninth grade counselor's recommended list for placement in ESP, but elected not to participate and were enrolled in the regular tenth grade program at Edison.

About three-fourths of the on-roll ESP students came from Northeast Junior High, one-fourth from Sheridan. About 60% were boys and 80% lived with both of their parents. Many of the students had poor attendance records in ninth grade; forty-one percent were absent twenty or more days, with a median of thirteen days absent. Scholastically, 73% of the students received a grade of D or F in ninth grade English, 84% received a D or F in ninth grade social studies, and 62% received a D or F in mathematics. The on-roll ESP students' median raw score on the Verbal Reasoning section of the Differential Aptitude Test was at the twenty-sixth percentile on Minneapolis citywide norms. The students' median raw score on the Numerical Ability section of the DAT was at the twenty-eighth percentile.

Compared with the on-roll ESP students, the students who left the ESP program during the year had poorer ninth grade attendance records (median days absent was twenty-seven), were better students in ninth grade (about 50-60 percent received a grade of D or F), and had similar scores on the Differential Aptitude Test.

The comparison students, those who chose not to participate in ESP, had better ninth grade attendance records (median days absent was seven) than did the on-roll ESP students, received better grades in junior high, and scored somewhat higher on the Differential Aptitude Test.

Behavioral Ratings

Ninth grade students in Minneapolis junior high schools are rated by teachers at the end of the school year on six behavioral categories;

Table 1

Description of ESP Students, Students Who Left ESP, and Comparison Students

		ESP Students N=87	Students Who Left ESP N=21	Comparison Students N=32
Sex	Male	61%	71%	66%
	Female	39	29	34
Junior High	Northeast	74%	63%	63%
	Sheridan	26	32	38
	Other	0	5	0
Parents in Home	Two	79%	70%	78%
	One	21	30	22
Days Absent in Ninth Grade	40 days or more	18%	37%	12%
	20-39 days	23	26	19
	10-19 days	21	26	16
	0-9 days	38	16	53
	Median days absent	13 days	27 days	7 days
Type of Math in Ninth Grade	General Math	70%	61%	65%
	Algebra	30	39	35
Grade in Ninth Grade English	A or B	9%	20%	16%
	C	19	20	31
	D or F	73	60	53
Grade in Ninth Grade Social Studies	A or B	5%	12%	4%
	C	11	29	25
	D or F	84	59	71
Grade in Ninth Grade Mathematics	A or B	11%	13%	36%
	C	27	38	32
	D or F	62	50	32
Differential Aptitude Test Verbal	Median Raw Score	11.7	11.0	12.7
	Minneapolis Percentile	26	22	30
Differential Aptitude Test Numerical	Median Raw Score	10.3	11.0	13.3
	Minneapolis Percentile	28	31	44

classroom involvement, assumption of work responsibility, critical-questioning attitude, classroom leadership, consideration of others, and feelings about self. The majority of the on-roll ESP students received ratings at the lower end of the scale on the four behavioral categories most closely related to school work (Table 2 on page 7). Fifty percent of the ESP students were rated by their teacher as uninvolved or very inconsistent on the classroom-involvement scale, 60% of the students were rated as sometimes or often refusing to assume responsibility for completion of their work, 60% were rated as rarely or never asking questions, and 76% were rated as having passive or negative leadership characteristics. About one-third of the ESP students were rated as being sometimes or often inconsiderate of the feelings of others. One-third also was rated as having unsure or poor self-images.

The ratings of students who left ESP during the year were somewhat more favorable than ratings of the on-roll students on five scales and similar to the ratings of on-roll students on the feelings-about-self scale.

The comparison students received more favorable teacher ratings than did the ESP students on all six behavioral categories. For example, on the classroom-involvement scale, 38% of the comparison students and 8% of the ESP students were rated as actively or very involved in classroom discussions and activities.

Achievement Test Results

The ESP staff members administered forms 3A and 3B of the Reading, English Expression, and Social Studies tests from the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) Series II to ESP students at the time they entered the program and again at the end of the year. The results discussed in this section are based on students who were in the ESP program the entire school year. Forms 3A and 3B were developed for use with typical students in grades 7-9. Publisher norms are not available for tenth grade students. The September 1972 scores were converted to percentiles using the test publisher's norms appropriate for fall ninth graders, while May 1973 scores were converted to percentiles using spring grade nine norms.

Table 2

Ninth Grade Behavioral Ratings of ESP Students, Students Who Left ESP, and Comparison Students

Behavioral Category	Behavioral Descriptor	ESP Students N=87	Students Who Left ESP N=21[a]	Comparison Students N=32
Involvement in Classroom Discussion and Activities	Very involved, initiates discussion	0%	0%	0%
	Active, shows genuine interest	8	33	38
	Mild involvement, politely attentive	42	33	41
	Uninvolved, distracted, attention wanders	36	20	22
	Very inconsistent, vacillates	14	13	0
Assumption of Responsibility for Completion of Work and Independent Study	Always accepts responsibility, much independent study	1	0	3
	Always accepts responsibility, some independent study	5	7	16
	Usually accepts responsibility, some independent study	33	53	47
	Sometimes refuses, little indep. study	39	13	31
	Often refuses, no independent study	21	27	3
Critical, Questioning Attitude	Frequently challenges or questions ideas	3	0	3
	Occasionally challenges or questions ideas	4	20	22
	Sometimes questions for clarification	33	33	41
	Rarely questions	30	20	25
	Does not question	30	27	9
Leadership in Classroom	Outstanding demonstrated leadership ability	0	0	3
	Occasionally demonstrates ability to lead	5	20	9
	Generally demonstrates independent self-confidence	18	33	44
	Passive and/or conforming; goes along	59	27	38
	Leadership contributions are negative	17	20	6
Consideration of Rights and Feelings of Others	Always considerate	5	7	6
	Usually considerate	25	33	41
	Not noticeably considerate or inconsiderate	38	33	44
	Sometimes inconsiderate	21	13	9
	Often inconsiderate	11	13	0
How Does Student Feel About Himself?	Consistently shows feelings of self-worth	3	7	9
	Usually shows good feeling about himself	36	27	59
	Inconsistent feeling about self	28	27	13
	Unsure of self and how to relate to others	20	27	16
	Poor self image, negative impression of self-worth	12	13	3

[a] Behavioral descriptions were available for 15 of the students who left ESP.

According to the STEP interpretation manual, the Reading test measures the ability to read and understand a variety of materials. One part of the test requires straightforward and inferential comprehension of sentence items. The student must answer questions about passages of varying lengths in the second part of the test. The English Expression test requires the student to evaluate the correctness and effectiveness of sentences by detecting grammatical errors or choosing among various rephrasings of sentences. The Social Studies test measures student development in broad skills and understandings, drawing items from political science, sociology, anthropology, economics, history and geography.

What gains, if any, did the ESP students make between September 1972 and May 1973 on these standardized achievement tests? Reading pretest and posttest scores were obtained for 67 of the 71 students who were in ESP all year, English Expression scores were obtained for 60 students, and Social Studies scores for 62 students. Mean scores and corresponding publisher percentiles based on ninth grade school norms are given in Table 3 on page 9.

Although the mean score was higher on the posttest than the pretest for both the Reading and English Expression tests, the gains were not substantial enough to improve the group's percentile rank corresponding to the mean scores. The percentile changes were negligible; down two percentile points from the 11th percentile to the 9th percentile on the Reading test and up two percentile points from the 13th to the 15th percentile on the English Expression test.

The ESP students showed greater improvement on the Social Studies test. The percentile (29) corresponding to the May 1973 mean posttest score was nineteen percentile points higher than the percentile (10) corresponding to the September 1972 mean pretest score.

Table 4 on page 10 presents another view of the achievement test scores. About one-fourth of the ESP students scored at or above the 40th percentile on the September 1972 administration of each of the three tests. Compared with the pretest, a somewhat greater percentage of students scored at or above the 40th percentile on the Reading and English Expression posttests given in May 1973. Greater improvement was shown on the Social Studies test. Forty-five percent of the students scored at or above

Table 3

Mean Scores, Publisher Percentiles Based on Mean Scores, and Percentile Gains for Edison ESP Students on the Reading, English Expression, and Social Studies Subtests of the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress

	Pretest Sept. 72	Posttest May 73	Gain
Reading (N=67)			
Mean Converted Score	438.6	443.8	5.2
Publisher Percentile	11	9	-2
English Expression (N=60)			
Mean Converted Score	432.0	435.0	3.0
Publisher Percentile	13	15	+2
Social Studies (N=62)			
Mean Converted Score	430.4	438.8	8.4
Publisher Percentile	10	29	+19

Table 4

Percentage of ESP Students at Selected Percentile Ranges on the Reading, English Expression, and Social Studies Subtests of the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress in September 1972 and May 1973

Percentile Range	Reading		English Expression		Social Studies	
	Sept. 72	May 73	Sept. 72	May 73	Sept. 72	May 73
60-99	13%	16%	17%	10%	16%	27%
40-59	12	13	13	25	11	18
20-39	37	21	28	27	24	24
0-19	37	49	42	38	48	31

Table 5

Number and Percentage of ESP Students Who Gained Selected Percentile Amounts Between September 1972 and May 1973 on the Reading, English Expression, and Social Studies Subtests of the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress

Percentile Gain or Loss	Reading		English Expression		Social Studies	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gain 20 +	5	7	8	13	15	24
Gain 10-19	8	12	5	8	14	23
Gain 1-9	12	18	14	23	13	21
Even 0	9	13	4	7	2	3
Loss 1-10	22	33	16	27	11	18
Loss 11+	11	16	13	22	7	11

the 40th percentile in May 1973, compared with 27% in September 1972.

Although 73% of the students showed raw score gains between fall and spring Reading tests, 37% gained on the publisher's norms, 13% stayed the same on the norms, and 49% lost on the publisher's norms (Table 5 on page 10). Individual percentile changes on the English Expression test were similar to the individual Reading test changes. On the Social Studies test, 68% of the students gained on the publisher's norms between fall and spring, 29% lost, and 3% stayed the same.

Mathematics achievement tests also were given to ESP students at the beginning and end of the school year. Results were not reported because the test was developed locally and normative information is not available.

STEP Achievement Summary

Between September 1972 and May 1973, ESP students made gains on the STEP Reading and English Expression tests that would be expected of students who scored well below the average on publisher's norms. Although mean raw scores were higher in the spring than in the previous fall, the percentile ranks corresponding to the mean raw scores were the same in the spring and fall. ESP students showed greater improvement on the Social Studies achievement test. The spring 1973 mean score corresponded to a percentile rank of 29, compared with a percentile rank of 10 in the fall of 1972.

Student Attitudes

ESP students were given a questionnaire in May 1973 that measured general attitudes toward school and specific attitudes toward the Employability Skills Program. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A. Attendance and graduation credit data also were collected for the first and second semester.

Tenth Grade Progress

Did the ESP students attend school regularly? Did they earn enough high school credits to be on schedule for graduation after three years of high school?

Attendance. The median number of days absent during the first semester of 1972-73 was 5 days for the seventy-one ESP students who were in the program the entire year (Table 6 on page 13). Attendance was not as good the second semester---the median days absent was 7 days. For the 1972-73 school year, 34% of the ESP students were absent twenty or more days, with a median of 13 days absent. The median days absent for the ESP students in ninth grade was 10.5 days, but 41% were absent twenty or more days.

The median days absent for the thirty-two comparison students, those who elected not to enroll in ESP, also increased from ninth (7 days) to tenth grade (10.5 days). However, contrary to the ESP students, the comparison group had a somewhat greater percentage of severe attendance problems in tenth grade than in ninth grade. Forty-two percent of the comparison students were absent twenty or more days in tenth grade, compared with 31% in ninth grade.

Dropout rates for tenth grade ESP students were similar to dropout rates for all other Edison tenth grade students. A student was defined as a dropout if he withdrew from ESP (if an ESP student) or Edison (if not an ESP student) without transferring to another high school program. According to data collected from the school records by the ESP Coordinator, the following numbers and percentages of tenth grade students who were enrolled in September dropped out of the program:

ESP Tenth Graders	3 of 90 or 3.3%
Non-ESP Tenth Graders	26 of 560 or 4.6%
Comparison Tenth Graders	1 of 32 or 3.1%

Credits. Three-year high schools in Minneapolis require that students earn at least thirty credits to receive a high school diploma. Therefore, a student should complete at least ten credits in tenth grade to be on schedule for graduation. After the first semester, 68% of the ESP students had earned five or more credits. At the end of the year, 26% of the ESP students had earned ten or more credits. However, another 51% of the ESP students had earned 8 to 9.5 credits for the year and could get back on a three-year graduation schedule if they took an extra class in eleventh grade.

Table 6

Tenth Grade Attendance and Graduation Credit Status of ESP Students and Comparison Students

		ESP Students N=71	Comparison Students N=32
Days Absent First Semester of Tenth Grade	20 days or more	7%	16%
	10-19 days	18	25
	0-9 days	75	59
	Median days absent	5 days	6.5 days
Days Absent Second Semester of Tenth Grade	20 days or more	14%	16%
	10-19 days	24	23
	0-9 days	62	61
	Median days absent	7 days	6 days
Total Days Absent Tenth Grade	40 days or more	11%	19%
	20-39 days	23	23
	10-19 days	31	16
	0-9 days	35	42
	Median days absent	13 days	10.5 days
Total Days Absent Ninth Grade	40 days or more	14%	12%
	20-39 days	27	19
	10-19 days	14	16
	0-9 days	45	53
	Median days absent	10.5 days	7 days
Graduation Credits Earned First Semester Tenth Grade	Five or more	68%	65%
	3 - 4.5	26	16
	2.5 or less	6	19
Graduation Credits Earned Tenth Grade Year	Ten or more	26%	27%
	8 - 9.5	51	48
	6 - 7.5	10	6
	5.5 or less	13	19

The students in the comparison group earned the same percentages of credits as did the ESP students. However, the comparison students had somewhat better grades in ninth grade than did the ESP students, although neither group sparkled academically in junior high.

In May 1973, the ESP students were asked if they planned on graduating from high school. Seventy-six percent of the ESP students said yes, 4% said no, and 20% were not sure.

General Attitudes

The questionnaire administered in May included nineteen items measuring school-related attitudes in the following areas: liking-of-school, teachers, curriculum relevance, student input, self-concept as a learner, positive reinforcement, and progress in learning. Seventeen of these items came from the Student Opinion Questionnaire (SOQ), a 93-item inventory developed by the Minneapolis Public Schools' Research and Evaluation Department. Since the SOQ had been administered to all Edison students in May 1972, comparative data from the year prior to ESP were available.

Table 7 on page 15 gives the percentage of ESP students who either strongly agreed or agreed with each of the nineteen statements. The table also gives the responses of two comparison groups who took the SOQ in May 1972: (1) Edison students in grades 10-12 who said they received average grades in school, and (2) tenth grade students. The group with average grades was selected as a comparison group because they most closely matched the description of grades that ESP students said they received. Sixty-two percent of the ESP students said they received average grades, 19% said below average, 8% said very low, while 9% said above average, and 3% said excellent.

The following precautions should be considered when comparing the attitudes of ESP students with the two comparison groups. Tenth graders have expressed more favorable attitudes than eleventh and twelfth graders on several SOQ items, particularly on items related to curriculum relevance and progress in learning. Since the 1971-72 average-achiever group includes eleventh and twelfth graders as well as tenth graders, this comparison group probably had less favorable responses than did 1971-72 average achievers from tenth grade only. Data is not available for 1971-72 tenth grade average achievers.

Table 7

Edison ESP and Previous Year Student Responses to Items Measuring General Attitudes Toward School

	ESP 1972-73 N=79	Edison Average Achievers 1971-72 N=539	Edison Tenth Graders 1971-72 N=461
Liking of School			
Schoolwork is interesting	49%	35%	47%
I like school	38	48	63
I don't like schoolwork	57	71	66
I don't like my classes	32	39	31
Teachers			
I think my teachers understand me	56	37	50
Most of my teachers seem to like me	76	73	81
Teachers in this school do a poor job	14	43	30
I like most of my teachers	80	69	74
Curriculum Relevance			
This school teaches me the things I want to learn	47	28	42
Most schoolwork will be useful to me when I get out of school	55	43	50
Student Input			
My teachers are willing to listen to suggestions from students	81	a	a
I have freedom in choosing what I want to study	56	a	a
Many times students are given a chance to decide what their class does	51	44	45
Self-Concept as a Learner			
I have the ability to learn most things	84	88	91
I see myself as a successful student	43	55	70
I am not very good in schoolwork	66	49	31
Positive Reinforcement			
I am praised when I do good work	54	40	45
I am always told about my bad work and not my good work	19	49	40
Progress in Learning			
I think I am learning a lot in school	59	35	50

[a]These two items are not included in the Student Opinion Questionnaire.

Previous studies of SOQ responses have indicated that students who said they received above average and excellent grades responded more favorably on most SOQ items than did students who said they received average and below average grades. Since more than 50% of the 1971-72 tenth grade comparison group said they received above average or excellent grades, this comparison group probably had more favorable responses than did 1971-72 tenth grade average achievers.

On the items measuring self-concept as a learner, 84% of the ESP students said they have the ability to learn most things, 43% said they see themselves as successful students, and 66% said they are not very good in schoolwork. The students in the two comparison groups saw themselves as better students than did the ESP students.

The ESP students expressed equally or more favorably attitudes than did students in the two comparison groups on all other items, with one exception. The one exceptional item measured a general attitude toward school, "I like school." Thirty-eight percent of the ESP students said they like school, compared with 48% of the 1971-72 average achievers and 63% of the 1971-72 tenth graders. On the other three liking-of-school items, the three groups expressed fairly similar attitudes.

The ESP students appeared to have more favorable views of their teachers than did students in the comparison groups. For example, 14% of the ESP students said teachers in this school do a poor job, while 43% of the 1971-72 average achievers and 30% of the 1971-72 tenth graders agreed with that statement. The ESP students also indicated they received more positive reinforcement than was indicated by the comparison students. Nineteen percent of the ESP students, compared with 49% of the 1971-72 average achievers and 40% of the 1971-72 tenth graders, said they are always told about their bad work and not their good work.

The ESP students had substantially more favorable attitudes than the 1971-72 average achievers and somewhat more favorable attitudes than the 1971-72 tenth graders on the two items related to curriculum relevance and the one item related to progress in learning. For example, 59% of the ESP students said that they think they are learning a lot in school, compared with 35% of the 1971-72 average achievers and 50% of the 1971-72 tenth graders.

Attitudes Toward ESP

ESP students were asked to indicate whether ESP helped them in several areas related to the objectives of the project. In academic areas, 85% of the students indicated ESP helped them improve their reading skills, 65% of the students said it improved their writing skills, 74% their math skills, and 63% their social studies skills (Table 8). When asked to compare what they learned in ESP with what they learned in the previous year or two, 54% said they were helped more with reading skills in ESP, 39% said they were helped more with writing skills in ESP, 52% more with math skills in ESP, and 36% more with social studies skills. About 10 - 20% of the ESP students said they learned more in each of the four skill areas in the one or two years prior to the ESP program than in the ESP program.

Table 8

Benefits of the Employability Skills Program as Perceived by Students

How Much Has ESP Helped You?			Area	Compared With Last Year, ESP Has Helped		
A Lot	Some	None		More	Same	Less
22%	63%	15%	Improved my reading skills	54%	37%	9%
9	56	35	Improved my writing skills	39	46	15
18	56	26	Improved my math skills	52	29	19
11	52	37	Improved social studies skills	36	42	22
14	60	26	Improved my understanding of myself	46	42	12
21	51	28	Learned how to get along with students	33	55	12
13	53	34	Learned how to get along with adults	28	51	22
36	53	12	Learned about different careers and jobs	73	16	10
19	41	41	Became more aware of what I want to do after I leave high school	56	30	14

About two-thirds to three-fourths of the ESP students said that ESP helped them improve self-understanding and learn how to get along with adults and other students. Forty-six percent of the students said ESP helped them improve self-understanding more than did programs in the previous year or two of school.

Sixty percent of the students said ESP helped them become more aware of what to do after high school, and about 90% said they learned about different careers and jobs. Learning about careers and jobs received the most favorable rating of all areas on the list. Seventy-three percent of the students said they learned more in ESP about careers and jobs than in the previous one or two years.

The ESP students also rated several special ESP activities in which they participated on a usefulness scale ranging from very useful to somewhat useful to not useful (Table 9). The number of ESP students who participated in the activities ranged from 8% who said they were tutored by another Edison student to 95% who said they watched full-length feature films. Other activities in which half or more students participated were a careers unit in social studies (47%), field trips (85%), reading paperbacks and magazines (92%), word games and puzzles (90%), and chess (55%).

The majority of the students who participated in each activity rated the activity as either very useful or somewhat useful. "Shadowing people on the job" received the highest usefulness rating; sixty-four percent of the students said shadowing was very useful and 28% said it was somewhat useful.

Table 9

Student Ratings of Special ESP Activities

Did You Participate?			If Yes, How Useful?[a]		
Yes	No	Activity	Very	Somewhat	Not
29%	71%	Shadowing people on the job	64%	28%	8%
47	53	Careers unit in social studies	28	62	10
85	15	Field trips	33	55	12
92	8	Reading paperbacks, magazines	36	53	11
22	78	Work program	32	63	5
8	92	Tutoring by another Edison student	10	50	40
95	5	Full-length feature films	27	63	10
23	77	Computer games	5	68	26
18	82	Working on Pocket to Ya	40	47	13
13	87	Group meetings with Nesbitt or Hite	38	38	23
90	10	Word games or puzzles	26	60	13
55	45	Chess	53	28	19

[a]Only students who indicated that they participated were included in the usefulness ratings.

Students' overall attitudes toward ESP were substantially more favorable than their attitudes toward a regular, or traditional, school program. When asked to compare ESP with the program they had the previous year, about 60% of the ESP students said they learned more and liked school more in ESP (Table 10). About 15% of the ESP students said they learned more and liked school more in the year prior to ESP, while 23% said there was no difference between ESP and the previous year.

Table 10

Student Comparisons Between ESP and Regular School Programs

Statement	Response	Percent N=79
Comparing last year with this year, I learned more	Last year	15%
	This year	62
	No difference	23
Comparing last year with this year, I liked school more	Last year	16
	This year	61
	No difference	23
If a program similar to ESP were available next year, what program would you choose?	Regular Edison Program	19
	ESP Program	81

If given a choice next year between the regular Edison program and a program similar to ESP, 81% of the ESP students said they would choose the program similar to ESP.

Student Views of Best and Worst Parts of ESP

In the May questionnaire students were asked to indicate what they thought were the best and worst parts of the Employability Skills Program. The student responses were grouped into categories based on similar content. The number in parentheses represents the number of students who made each particular response or one similar to it.

Best Parts. About half of the "best" responses were in the general area of student freedom and responsibility for doing and selecting their own work.

- Working at your own speed or rate (14)
- Working on your own (4)
- Exercising self-reliance (1)
- Taking a lot of responsibility on yourself (1)
- Doing almost everything on my own because I learn more that way (1)
- Selecting what you want to learn (3)
- Not being pushed or forced to do things you don't want to do (5)
- Doing work you like (1)
- Doing your own thing (1)

Other student comments about the best parts of ESP fell into categories such as relevance, openness, fun, movies-field trips, learning about yourself, free time, and grading.

- Doing what you and teachers think will help you in the future (1)
- Working on what you need (1)
- Not going over things you learned already (1)

- More open atmosphere; most of teachers will listen to you (1)
- Not being afraid to speak your mind; you can be friendly to a teacher that helps you (1)
- Get credit for your thoughts and not your teacher's thoughts (1)
- Teachers are more experienced in working with us; more freedom (1)

- I talk to some kids and they don't mind coming to school; ESP gave kids a lot more interest in school (1)
- Most of the work is fun (1)
- It's fun (1)

- Field trips have been good (3)
- Movies (2)
- Field trips and movies (2)
- Field trips and shadowing experiences (1)
- Field trips, movies, shadowing, and games; not cooped up all day long (1)

- Gives the kids a chance to find out who they are, what they can do (1)
- You can learn a lot about your career; now I know what I want to do (1)

- Free time (3)
- Being able to have at least one day a week for fun and games (1)
- Every Friday we have a game day when you can play games, read paperback books, etc. (1)

- I am graded on what I do not what everyone else does (1)
- I love it; it compares each student with himself (1)

Worst parts. The ESP students made fewer comments about the worst parts of ESP than they did about the best parts. Comments that the work was not hard enough and criticisms of individual teachers were the only categories with more than one comment.

- The work is second grade, there's no challenge. You don't learn anything (1)
- I like more work to do at least bring work home once in a while (1)
- You don't really get anything out of it (1)
- If you don't do any work the teacher's don't care (1)

- Criticisms of individual teachers (3)

- Teachers let some kids do whatever they want while they make others work (1)
- The kids are too mean and snotty (1)
- They still mark to darn hard for me and others in the program (1)
- Being pushed around by some of the teachers (1)
- When you get homework (1)
- Not enough films (1)

Recommendations

1. Continue a special program for students who are similar to the students who participated in the 1972-73 Employability Skills Program. A majority of the 1972-73 ESP students felt they benefited academically from participating in the program. Students' attitudes toward special program aspects of ESP and toward teachers were positive; eighty percent would choose ESP over a regular high school program if they had a choice next year.

2. High priority should be given to the continued development of a program to improve the basic skills of the students, particularly in reading. About three-fourths of the ESP students scored at or

below the 39th percentile on a standardized reading test using ninth grade norms both at the beginning and the end of the 1972-73 school year. Since one-third of the ESP students were eligible for SLBP instruction, more individual or small group instruction from SLBP tutors seems like a reasonable approach. Perhaps the reading program provided by all ESP teachers can be altered in some way to produce greater reading improvement among the students.

3. <u>If the vocational-career and employability-skills aspects are to continue as objectives of the program, more resources should be put into this area</u>. The 1972-73 ESP students responded favorably to field trips, career units, and the shadowing experiences and indicated that they learned about careers and occupations. However, it seems that the program would be much stronger if the counselors and work coordinators were more involved with the program. More work experience opportunities and more vocational counseling seem appropriate.

Appendix A

The Student Questionnaire

Minneapolis Public Schools

Edison Employability Skills Program 1-3 _____

This questionnaire asks you how you feel about school and about special parts of the ESP program. Please answer as thoughtfully and honestly as possible.

For each of the following statements indicate whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree by marking (X) in the correct space.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(4)	Schoolwork is interesting	____	____	____	____
(5)	My teachers are willing to listen to suggestions from students	____	____	____	____
(6)	I am praised when I do good work	____	____	____	____
(7)	This school teaches me the things I want to learn	____	____	____	____
(8)	I think I am learning a lot in school	____	____	____	____
(9)	I think my teachers understand me	____	____	____	____
(10)	I have the ability to learn most things	____	____	____	____
(11)	Most of my teachers seem to like me	____	____	____	____
(12)	I am always told about my bad work and not my good work	____	____	____	____
(13)	I like school	____	____	____	____
(14)	I see myself as a successful student	____	____	____	____
(15)	I have freedom in choosing what I want to study	____	____	____	____
(16)	Many times students are given a chance to decide what their class does	____	____	____	____
(17)	I don't like school work	____	____	____	____
(18)	Most school work will be useful to me when I get out of school	____	____	____	____
(19)	Teachers in this school do a poor job	____	____	____	____
(20)	I don't like my classes	____	____	____	____
(21)	I am not very good in school work	____	____	____	____
(22)	I like most of my teachers	____	____	____	____

For each of the areas listed below indicate on the left how much the ESP program has helped you this year. Then on the right indicate how much ESP has helped you compared with the last year or two in school.

	How Much Has ESP Helped?			Area	Compared With Last Year, ESP Has Helped			
	A Lot	Some	None		More	Same	Less	
(23)	____	____	____	Improved my reading skills	____	____	____	(32)
(24)	____	____	____	Improved my understanding of myself	____	____	____	(33)
(25)	____	____	____	Became more aware of what I want to do after I leave high school	____	____	____	(34)
(26)	____	____	____	Improved my writing skills	____	____	____	(35)
(27)	____	____	____	Learned about different careers and jobs	____	____	____	(36)
(28)	____	____	____	Improved my math skills	____	____	____	(37)
(29)	____	____	____	Learned how to get along with adults	____	____	____	(38)
(30)	____	____	____	Improved social studies skills	____	____	____	(39)
(31)	____	____	____	Learned how to get along with students	____	____	____	(40)

Listed below are some ESP activities in which you may have participated. On the left indicate whether or not you participated in each activity by marking (X) YES or NO. For each activity where you check YES, indicate on the right how useful the activity was.

	Did You Participate?		Activity	If Yes, How Useful?			
	Yes	No		Very	Somewhat	Not	
(41)	____	____	Shadowing people on the job	____	____	____	(53)
(42)	____	____	Careers unit in social studies	____	____	____	(54)
(43)	____	____	Field trips	____	____	____	(55)
(44)	____	____	Reading paperbacks, magazines, newspapers	____	____	____	(56)
(45)	____	____	Work program	____	____	____	(57)
(46)	____	____	Tutoring by another Edison student	____	____	____	(58)
(47)	____	____	Full-length feature films	____	____	____	(59)
(48)	____	____	Computer games	____	____	____	(60)
(49)	____	____	Working on Pocket To Ya	____	____	____	(61)
(50)	____	____	Friday group meetings with Nesbitt or Hite	____	____	____	(62)
(51)	____	____	Word games or puzzles	____	____	____	(63)
(52)	____	____	Chess	____	____	____	(64)

(65) Comparing last year with this year, I learned more

_____1. Last year

_____2. This year

_____3. No difference

(66) Comparing last year with this year, I liked school more

_____1. Last year

_____2. This year

_____3. No difference

(67) Which way do you prefer to do your work in school?

_____1. Do the same work at the same time as the rest of my class

_____2. Have my own individual work to do

_____3. Makes no difference

The following few questions are about the ESP math program. Indicate your answer by marking the choice that best tells how you feel. If you are not taking ESP math, go to question (72).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(68) I enjoy ESP math	_____	_____	_____	_____
(69) I like being able to work on my own rather than having everyone in the math class working on the same thing	_____	_____	_____	_____
(70) I like the idea of tests before and after each math unit	_____	_____	_____	_____
(71) I am not receiving enough help in math class	_____	_____	_____	_____

How do you think the ESP math class could be improved?

(72) If a program similar to ESP were available next year, what program would you choose?

_____1. Regular Edison program

_____2. ESP program

(73) At this time do you plan on graduating from high school?

_____1. Yes

_____2. No

_____3. Not Sure

(74) How would you describe the grades you have received during the last 2-3 years in school?

_____1. Excellent

_____2. Above average

_____3. Average

_____4. Below average

_____5. Very low

In your own words, what do you think are the best and worst parts about the ESP program?

What suggestions do you have for improving the ESP program?

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